

We Stand, yet our brothers have fallen

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Summary: Phase one complete, four chapters in all. For a generation of humans who were born after the first contact with the covenant, the thought of Pease is, unusual. chapter four, a Ballard for Kris.

1. how many lost?

We Stand, yet our brothers have fallen

We have lost all, but we are not aloneâ€|

This is the me getting around to realizing that fan fic. is not all that bad and I should put more work into what I put on here, this is the edited version, and all new posts will be edited.

Note: this story corresponds with all other stories regarding my idea of halo, so you will see some of the same characters in other stories.

legal disclaimer-ish thing that will keep me un-sueable: halo bungee, Spartans, elites, and everything else in this story that can also be found in the Halo franchise is property of Microsoft after they became Bungee's "Bubba".

And so we began, life requires it

-Magfrump

Tears. Tears were in-between Vellen's eyes and the her com console. She stood alone, down at her station, with the weight of the message burning into her soul. She sent the message to the command peninsula and sat in the darkness now that the screen was black. Her soft, clay like skin shuddered with the thought. and under her flight crew uniform she shook.

She was a warrior but she shook, embarrassing for an Elite, but that

thought never crossed her mind. The only thought that did, for the longest time, was the number.

Forty billion dead.

Forty billion of her own kind. Burned.

The prophets had turned on the Elites. And burned Vellen's home. Burned the river where she played and grew. Burned the Citadel of the ancients. Burned the thought caught her breath- burned her parents in the commune of the aged and her younger brother in combat school.

Then the holo-panel came to life again, and the truth road out of the fog of war, Mersey had joined regret in the afterlife, and now even Truth had followed them on the path to the Great journey.

Then all that was known were burned away like flesh under plasma; blood to steam, muscle to cinders, bone to ash. The arbiter spoke to the fleet. To what was left to the fleet, and then the- by the Rings! the Oracle!- who told them of the true nature of the great journey- Vellen was shocked. Tilipi, her assistant grunt, looked up into utter amassment, Vellen returned the look, their world was, was new, and yet- Old, but old in the way that mountains are old, the way the time that flows about them is thick with knowledge.

After that there wasn't that much important information. Lots of personal communications between the ship and others, then the Capitan sent down for her. "Send up anything relevant, and monitor the communications, any information on the state of the Covenant will be blocked." Vellen said, then quieter "Do you know anyone on the Bridge Defense crew?"

Tilipi looked up, they had both just seen the information that the Brutes, Jackals, and Drones had allied for the most part, and the Grunts were sticking beside the Elites in their rebellion. Also the Hunters had helped the Elites regain a large number of ships and were now fighting along their side.

"Gaba is the Grunt in command of it, he owes me twenty units methane." Tilipi's eyes were motionless, dead serious.

"Tell him to prep his squad for combat" Vellen looked side to side as she spoke "Quietly. And to keep an eye on the Jackals; if they learn of what's going on before the captains orders we could lose the ship."

"And I will get a squad down to the drone cages, purge the atmosphere in that section on the captain's orders." Tilipi turned to the lower holo-panel designed for him, working madly. Vellen then started walking to the captain, patting Tilipi on the shoulder as she went. She respected Tilipi, he was a good Grunt, an equal.

Finding the Captain's Station was not a hard thing to do, it was a good fifteen units off the ground and surrounded by holo-panels on all sides except for the sloping ramp up to the command center. Captain Kallon had the respect of every Elite, Grunt, and Hunter on the Truthful Flower. He stood on the bridge, hunched over, speaking to a grunt in a tone usually only used for brethren, he fiddled with the pipe he took from the human he captured on halo; the human that

gave him his promotion and his ticket off that spinning rock straight to the his command station on the _Truthful Flower_.

He was tall even for an Elite, even lanky, his neck protruded from his chest slightly longer than his armor could cover. In-between his chest armor and his leggings his skin could be seen. Despite the mistrust from the more devote members of the Covenant onboard, Kallan carried a human sidearm in place of his plasma rifle. He spoke a few more words to the Grunt who turned off, walking past Vellen.

The Grunt nodded as he waddled, his methane breather squeaking with his short breaths, looked for a moment at Vellen then continued his obviously difficult task of walking gracefully in full environment gear.

"Nothing to report Captain, I have sent up anything relevant to you since theâ€¦ incident"

"Vellen, I know you better than that. Who have you and Tilipi mustered?" The Captain didn't even jump as a nearby Jackal squawked in slight alarm. _What's the fool up to now?_ Vellen thought_ is he ****trying**** to lose the ship?_

In a low voice "Um, Tilipi has a squad at the drone cages ready to spring the atmosphere, and the word has been sent to the Grunts and Elites on the Bridge Defense team. I am sorry for doing this without orders, Sir."

"Well the time for orders is over; and we were fools to ever to take orders. Air starve the drones and put me on a holo-feed throughout the ship."

"Indeed"

In a instant, light erupted on every deck of the ship. On every panel, light coalesced into the shape of a giant Elite, the Captain, bathed in crisp solar light.

But then a shadow fell about the Captain, something that never happened before on his ship wide communicatÃ©s.

Brothers,

Sisters,

Friends,

All that we were is lost.

so many have fallen

Regret

and now

Truth and Mercy

The Brutes have murdered all but a scant few of the Council

And have installed them selves in the Seats of the Prophets
The humans stand at our mercy
Yet our ships in their orbit wage war on one and other
And the dead.

so many

dead

70 billion

The Brutes, Jackals, and Drones

Have burned the home world of the Elites!

And are now fighting their way to the world of the Hunters!

we shall aid our kin

our rightful kin

Helm! best speed to Dã;llidis!

And to all, kill any Jackal who does not surrender. This is a
order.

AND PREPARE FOR BATTLE!

The ship shuttered as a decompression reverberated somewhere in the
hull just as the ship crossed the void into slip-space.

Next Chapter: Common Evil

Thank you and good-night.

2. Common Evil

Chapter 2: Common Evil

Notes:. Also as far as I can tell, one Covenant Unit in distance is
about two feet, and in time one Covenant unit is about 4 minutes.
Also they seem to use the same term for their equivalent of hours and
miles, so it's a little confusing. If the Covenant counting system is
base 4, then one hour unit should be 40 minute units? And their mile
unit would be 400 feet units? Email me if you have any information on
this subject. For that manner, if you have any suggestions/ advice
that's too long for a review, email me.

Truthful Flower, Slip-Space, origination point: course correction
enrote to tril'mefre

Tilipi never liked slip-space. The thought of tearing a hole in the
blackness of space to a universe where it was even darker just
bothered him.

And the plasma scoring half a unit away from his head wasn't

helping.

It was truly over before it began. The Captain's holo set it all off. Then the "air starving" of the drones, as the Captain had so elegantly put it, put them out of the equation. In response, nearly every Jackal on the ship rose up and were reminded that they were truly "cannon fodder".

A few shots and that was the end of it. But one shot was just a little to closeâ€|

Vellen was somewhere off-duty and had asked Tilipi to brief the night shift. After that, maybe he could get half a night of sleep in a methane room, a meal, full air bladder, and a side-arm. After that would be a battle shift.

Beneath him, Vellen strode down a corridor stepping over the occasional Jackal. The day's actions were still clouding her mind. In many ways she was still in shock by the short battle, but the feeling was rubbing off. The ship was transforming; on any other day half the creatures in these halls would be out of uniform, Grunts holding their breath as they ran from methane room to methane room, too lazy to dawn environmental gear.

Outside of his crew, Captain Kallon was not known for running a clean ship.

Yet today the Crew was a flurry of brightly polished red, blue, iron, yellow, and black.

But he was known and respected by his crew as a good leader.

Vellen stopped at a door. It wasn't her door, but in the back of her mind she knew where she was. Memories fell back slowly, like feathers wafted on wind. She felt her hand upon her neck, felt her digits upon the scar. She winced and walked past the door, on to her cabin.

Vellen's cabin was always a cause of many angry moments. She had the head room but not enough floor space so she felt like a tree living in a straw; but she made the best of it. Nibbling on the piece of bird the mess officer had offered, she turned to her Commando-black bridge armor. She never understood why a bridge officer needed top-of-the-line armor, especially for a Com officer no less! But it was one thing Kallon was adamant about; having the Bridge crew ready for the worst, and look for the best. After removing her cloth ship's crew uniform she looked at the window, the light in the cabin made the material reflective. She had been told by a boy she was pretty when she was younger back onâ€| She silenced the thought as images of glassed valleys and a burned world filled her head. She realized her hand was on her scar and she pulled it away.

Her form held only a small leather bag from the neck. In the silence of her cabin she took it off and opened it, peering into the precious contents. She poured out a gold necklace onto her hand, feeling the warmth of the medal. A gold chain and a gold plate barely the size of a digit; a circle with diamond dust for stars, so many stars, conglomerating into a galaxy, her galaxy. On the back held the information that made this a secret. On the back, in human letters no less, was one word. "HOPE." She cherished this and hid it away

against her skin, the chain around her neck. After feeling her skin come in contact with the necklace she realized how long she had stood there unclothed. Embarrassed by this fact, she turned to her armor. The eerie medal shown as if it were glowing, yet it was darker than slip-space. She lifted the armor, piece by piece, exposing the mosaic of a prophet that the armor rested upon. With wisdom, she grafted the armor to her flesh. With her task complete, she killed both the light and gravity, floating off to sleep dreaming of summer moss fields.

Tilipi rose from his ice slate to shill singing. In response, he drew his pistol and fired. Sparks flew from the speaker box in sporadic spurts. His day was off to a good start, definitely a good start. He spent more time than most days applying his armor, checking and double checking the seals to his suit.

"U hate prophet voice?" said a young Grunt that hadn't completely mastered Elite Basic.

"No, just a voice at this time of day"

Vellen awoke, her black eyes rolling open to the universe. She dropped her head back, spinning her body until slamming her hoofs against the bulkhead, outstretching her hand to engage the gravity. Vellen felt her weight return; the feeling was not tiring as she expected, but empowering.

Leaving the room, she paused, reached both hands behind her; one grabbed a plasma rifle, the other grabbed the mosaic of a prophet.

And threw it to the floor, shattering it.

Vellen then walked out into the ship. Powerful, Honorable, an Elite. She passed Grunts that ran about with intention, a few of them were using some Jackal blood that was splotched here and there as war paint. She passed a Hunter pair who were chanting a battle cry, starting softly as she passed but growing ever louder, seeming as though it was always the same volume as she walked away.

"By our hands, our world shall be saved!

By our hands, our world shall be saved!

By our hands, our world shall be saved!

By our hands, our world shall be saved!

By our hands, our world shall be saved!"

She walked to the bridge and found herself walking with Tilipi. He had a needler slung to either leg and from experience she new that he was very good with them. A yellow light pulsed twice from a nearby holo emitter.

"One unit until we drop out of slip-space, we should hurry." Tilipi went from a brisk walk to a flat out run. Vellen went to a brisk walk. Once at the bridge, they went around to their station, relieving the night shift. As Tilipi and the night shift grunt passed, Tilipi said "Give them salvation Pelto" and the two grabbed

each other by the arm and stared each other in the eye for a moment. Then the other grunt moved on.

"Friend of yours?" Vellen asked, without much interest.

"We both went through training together I promised his house matriarch I would watch out for him; a bit of a klutz but a stalwart warrior."

With a double ping the bridge doors slid open and there stood the Captain in his iridescent crimson-orange armor. His steps clicked across the deck, reverberating through the silent room. Reaching his post, he turned to face his crew.

"As you were. Today we join our kin- the kin that has not turned on us- in battle! As far as we know, we are one of the first ships to rally at Dãllidis and we are charged with defending the planet until reinforcements arrive. We can expect casualties. We can expect pain and loss. But we shall not die in vain!"

"You have seen the tactical data on the humans, how they sacrificed so many warriors upon their ships for a planet of civilians, they were RIGHT to do so! All we saw was them protecting the weak, and hindering the path to the great journey. But all they wanted was peace, a calm. A calm we blindly only saw in the Great Journey. We have fought too long, so, so long, and now we can only imagine what peace is."

"But now we can stop imagining peace, stop calling it by the Great Journey, we can create it. And we will start. Right now. We will protect those who can not protect themselves!"

Cheers erupted from the Bridge, the loudest from the Hunter pair that was on Bridge Defense.

"Dropping out of Slip-Space" The Nav. Officer said "In 3, 2, 1!" Light fizzled into being on the main view screen.

"Activating instantaneous information network crystals:" Vellen's voice was all duty, not her preferred way of speaking. "The three ships in system are the _Silver Blade, Forerunner Tapestry,_ and the _Windward Shield._ All show as friendly, The _Silver Blade_ was nearby like us. The _Forerunner Tapestry_ is a heavy Weapons ship, 50 plasma turrets, laser banks, and reverse engineered Human magnetic accelerator cannons, it will be nice to have in a fight. The _Windward Shield_ is the system defense ship, light curser, refitted for a Hunter only crew. Crystals coming online, Elite victory at Sol, remaining ships are enroute, along withâ€¦ Human ships?"

"Ship count?"

"17 of ours, 65 Human. That's all."

"Commander Vellen?"

"Yes sir?"

"Never underestimate Humans."

"Eye sir"

ONI Building for alternative matters. Nebraska

Anna Silverman was extent of the UNC diplomatic taskforce. she had always been branded a traitor as she tested surrender speeches in her windowless office in Polaris. That was before Polaris was glassed and she was sent to CASTLE base on Reach. Then when the Covenant ships loomed above Reach the order was given for the second time to compress all data and make for a FTL capable craft. scoring a ride from a ONI spook, she was sent to another windowless office, this time on earth.

Anna took off her glasses and rubbed her eyes. She slicked her clay brown hair back behind her ears and slid on her shoes. Standing up from the desk rubbed her sore shoulders and shuffled to the cooker unit on the other side of the "cell" as her AI had named it. Ever since the first Covenant fleet attacked earth and were destroyed to weeks ago she had gotten only a few hours of sleep. Updating census information, natural resource inventories, she hated her job. But everybody new that we won because the fleet that attacked earth was only several dozen ships. Several dozen ships had destroyed two of the two orbital gun platforms and 20 of earth's fleet.

The fleet that destroyed Reach was ten times the size of the fleet that attacked earth. And it was only a matter of time until a fleet that size showed up here.

Her fingers numbly made instant coffee and lifted a sandwich out of the mini fridge. she drained the coffee in one uncomfortable gulp and then finicky assaulted her sandwich. As she began to wonder how many years old the mayonnaise used for the sandwich was when the color of the lighting tinged purple. She turned to the holo-emitter Expecting Darled but in his place was this buildings ONI attachÃ©, Hale. Her self picked animation was a soldier animated as a kids Holo show would be animated. Over-exaggerated emotions and beauty.

"Anna your services are required..."

"How badâ€¦ are we losing" Anna had been on the ONI payroll for twelve years to prepare her for this day but she still loathed the thought of surrender. When the AI couldn't seem to find the words it wanted Anna spoke again. "give me a minute to collect my speech"

"Oh but its not like that" The AI was pacing back and forth while trying to explain the situation. "Most of the fleet just jumped with... There has been some sort of coo in the Covenant. We always suspected races that were conquered by the Covenant were added to their ranks, hence your position Dr. Silverman," Anna dropped the sandwich with a dull thud. Anna through herself at her desk, franticly collecting papers and data cubes. Turning back to the bewildered Hale she screamed "well don't just stand there, keep talking!"

"Right... brass will be up in ten minutes, they will be fully briefing you on your flight, as far as I can tell the Elites seceded from the Covenant because of loss of political footing or something. The grunts and hunters stood with them against the rest of the Covenant. Mind you all of this is very sketchy Intel. The Master Chief showed up in the battle, and had about 30 seconds to talk fast about everything that happened to the Covenant lately" Anna Slammed

her suitcase closed, and was pulling on her uniform when a second AI formed in the holo field. Glasses, scrawny build and 21st century business attire, a perfect Animation for her paper pushing AI, Charles.

"Were in hell have you been!" Anna was rushing herself for the first time in years. Exhilarating.

"your lucky I got here at all! the ONI network is getting slammed with transitions about what just happened, the civvies don't believe it"

"Christ, I don't believe it" Anna was brushing her hair back into what could almost be considered up to code "you" pointing at Hale "tell the brass to meet me at the landing pad we don't have time for there damn pleasantries."

"you just don't want them to see your office don't yo-"

"I SAID NOW YOU SADISTIC PILE OF CIRCITS!"

"pff! humans.. see you around Charles"

"And you..." Anna found herself smiling "sort our files and yourself, I want every last bit copied and handwritten into our planes onboard memory I do not have time for network lag." She was stepping out the door when she turned around "and for your own good stay away from that Hale, for your own good"

"Article 51 Amendments to the Rights of Artificial intelligences give me the right to tell you to shove off on that one."

"Fine" Anna was yelling over her shoulder as she sprinted down the hall "hell if we pull this off, you two can have a week off in a privet server for all I care!"

as she turned a corner Charles popped up on a electronic bill board and whispered "I'm going to hold you to that"

Onboard the _Custer,_ the de-facto human flagship, Slip-Space.

John kept his finger on his holstered pistol. This would take some getting used to. In front of him Captain Logan was being briefed by a Grunt who was standing on a bar stool brought up from the officers lounge.

"We expect big bunch bad things! Maybe 150 ships, all bigger this one"

Next to them stood Ethan, a whiny AI dressed in a bed sheet robe, crown, and a scepter with some sort of controller on the end. He seemed to have a frustrated look from all the translating Grunt to English and English to Grunt.

"This is going to take some getting used to" Sergeant Johnson said. John looked over and saw that the sergeant still had his finger on the trigger of his battle rifle. This *_was_ **going to take some getting used to. Fifteen hours ago, he had killed the Prophet of Truth and a too many covenant to count to get to the Prophet. To his bewilderment, he found out that the human ships were only shooting at

about half of the covenant ships; even stranger, half weren't firing at the UED ship but rather themselves.

In this battle among a attack fleet, a victor was found, a poetic Elite explained a few things, a truce was made, a cry for help was presented, and a response in good faith was sent.

John was sent.

Along with what was left of the UED fleet.

"Hey! Captain Dude, we will be there about 5 min's or so." Then after a moment "yewwata! de baaaaa Woof!"

"Thank you Eathen, get everyone to battle stations, and prep all Pelicans and Hell-Jumpers for friendly territory landing and reinforcing." Captain Logan was fingering his short red mustache as he sent off orders.

"That's my cue for an exit" Sergeant Johnson nodded at Master Chief and walked off barking orders into a radio.

"Master Chief, I want your Spartans on the MAC Dart boarding party. They are going to attempt to take the enemy flagship. Your primary objective is to assist., but remember, our new friends are still not to be completely trusted." The Captain was skimming over the ships inventory, "At battle duration 20 minutes we will be detonating a full spread of Nova bombs, that is your operation time limit."

"Yes sir."

Master Chief slid down the zero gee access ways of the ship. The 2nd generation Slip-Space drives could out-run the Covenant, and jump in with their accuracy, but it drew so much power that non essential systems were shut down in Slip-Space. As he reached the air hatch to the Dart room, he cycled through it, on the other side he found his three remaining Spartans, Fred Will and Linda along with fourteen Elites, and a dozen Marines.

Darts were a new addition to the UED Navy, they were projectiles that were loaded into the MAC guns, and fired at low yield. Inside was hydrostatic gel, like the liquid in Spartan armor, which reduced G-forces. Each could sit two humans or one Spartan plus their tactical equipment. Also, each dart had a small ion engine to maneuver back to the mother ship in case of a miss.

If there was a mother ship left.

Darts came about because the best the UED Navy could do was stall a Covenant Fleet for about half an hour at best, then everybody would be dead, except the Covenant. Near suicidal missions were better than plain extinction.

Darts were manned by "bananas" , a special wing of the Hell-Jumpers division. They got their name from the saying "Time flies like an arrow, fruit flies like a banana". All of them knew that they were being loaded into a gun and fired, and if they missed, they had a 3 survival rate. It took a special kind of crazy to join the Hell-Jumpers.

But it took a death wish to join the Bananas.

John had already prepped his Dart; technicians were trying to find a way to connect an Elite's life support systems to the Darts, and had settled on duck tape.

John enclosed himself into his Dart, letting the Fluid envelop him.

On the bridge Captain Logan started counting down to the entrance into normal space. At the end, he was rewarded with a near blinding flash of light.

Above him hung the Brute fleet like a swarm of locusts.

"Assign targets, if those maggots think we're easy targets, by hell were going to prove them wrong."

Next Chapter: Vellen's scar.

3. Vellen's scar

Next Chapter: Vellen's scar.

hey 7hanxs to Magfrump and Duffman for all the spelling/ grammar help. Also chapters get up faster when u guys sent me reviews to encourage me.

Starting off: sorry, don't throw stuff at me I know its up late, sorry. and here it is.

Some of you (yes I know there is only about two of you) will notice the change in the first two chapters this is editing now that I concenter this an important project, I want to get back on the right foot.

Also Capt. 1&2 were fixed a bit, just a little detail added, might want to check it out, might not.

When ever you see a name of a song/ band at the begging of a new moment like below, download it and play it while reading

sorta like this:

(duke mo, Buddha Bar

Vellen frantically thought of any...)

Chapter 3 Vellen's scar

"Captain, comm. just died!" Vellen called up to the Captain as she repaired a puncture wound in Tilipi's suit.

"what was the last Tactical report?" it was a relief to hear Kallon's voice after seeing the bulked above the Command deck give way.

"We have borders in second cargo bay, and shields are down. I don't expect to take another hit"

Kallon was hunched over the nav. station its previous occupant slumped on the floor, his blood dripping into the mosaic floor freely. "I am taking us down, get to the lower the decks and see who you can get out of them, there going to collapse in the "landing"."

Vellen ran to the nearest hatch and stumbled through it as the gravity shut down. Looking back she saw Tilipi look her way one for a moment and turned back to holding a dieing brethren, smoke and sparks flying about him.

Dart 26- onboard the Custer

Markis Clenched his teeth and contorted his face, anticipating the pain. He had launched once before, making him a veteran. It also gave him more dart launches than anyone on the _Custer_.

Three percent survival rateâ€¦ I am really pushing my luck

Markis felt his weight swell to ten times himself for an instant, then there was no weight at all. His head swelled as he came out of the red-out, but he new being upside down for the acceleration would be worth it for the deceleration.

Then the dart slammed into a covenant curser at three kilometers a second.

Darkness

Markis felt the nero-stim drugs brushing against his sanity. He was about to complain to Challis, his family's AI that he didn't want to go to school today. Then he birthed in deeply and gagged at the smell of hydrostatic gel. Coming awake he dreaded the hangover that accompanied a red-out/ black-out combo.

That's like you Markis, sitting somewhere in a covenant curser and your worrying about a headache!

He reached over his shoulder and clicked his radio twice to signal he was alive, that someone was alive on the curser. he started cycling the gel vents on his suit closed and shaking Dylan, the other occupant of his Dart, out of his black out. After a moment he knew Dylan wasn't going to open his eyes.

A green light came on and he new his suit would hold the vacuum out, he released the clamps and jumped out, pistol in hand, scanning his area for any threat, satisfied of limited safety he reached inside his dart and retrieved his duffle bag stile equipment case. After a moments thought he took Dylan's bag as well. Reemerging from the dart, he looked about him the charred innards of the ship, the light of ships exploding, rockets firing, and plasma burning shown his way. He spun down a corridor, its metal walls twisted and skewered.

His training kicked in, and he passed a sealing bulkhead. Ripping open the terminal he started yanking on fiber optic cable, and pulsing lights from his hacking kit down the wires. Soon the door behind him slammed shut, and atmosphere filled the hall.

so far so good

Eminently he opened the valves of his suit, and then took off his helmet. pulling out his breathing tube and spitting hydrostatic gel. After a moment he realized someone was watching him, someone was close watching him. Lunging forward without ever a hint of leaving his crumpled over position, Markis found his hands around the throats of two shaking Jackals.

"Were you two trained in human speech?"

They both nodded hastily

"Good". Lifting up his four foot tall catch as he stood letting there feet dangle above the deck. "tell me how to get to the bridge"

"Never tell primate scum nothin!" the other nodded in agreement.

Hearing this Markis threw one to the ground holding him still under his foot, and using his free hand to break the Jackal's off. Throwing him to the side he looked the one under his foot in the eye, now screaming more than the first one. As he lifted the second one, a Engineer hummed by, minding his own business. Turning so the first jackal could see he swam a knife fluidly through the air, then stabbed it into the second jackal's chest. dropping the knife to the ground he stabbed his hand into the wound, the sound of the two jackal's screaming was deafening, Fishing about methodically he latched his hand around what he was looking for, and pulled his hand out.

Inside his palm a heart quivered quickly.

After waving it in front of the second jackal his eyes clouded over and he dropped him to the ground. Cleaning hands on the first jackal's skin he threw him at the engineer, who scooped him up and hurried away down the corridor. Markis couldn't figure out if what he had just done was more of a scare tactic for the enemy, or stress relief, he settled that it was a bit of both.

As he assembled his gear he checked his watch, five minutes in, fifteen to go.

"all units, report in, rendezvous at my location" Instantaneously afterward three static blips _so at least all the Spartans got on board_ then the rest of the boarding party sighed in, ten made it, twenty didn't. One of the best landings in Dart history.

"All right boys & girls, were in luck there is a lot more than expected of us here. group as you go Double time to the bridge!"

In response a throng of misalaneus "hell ya's", "W00ts" and other cries erupted. All preceded by three static blips.

Death was everywhere. The halls were lined with the deceased but there were still breathing creatures on the ship, so she still had a job to do. running down the halls she found a working com station, setting it to blare a warning to anyone in hearing range, and scurrying off to do the same lower in the ship.

Master chief had seen war, he had lived it his entire life, but every

few years he saw its toll, looking down at Reach from orbit after it had been glassed, for example was one of the few sights that ever made him afraid. Now, he was afraid again. He was about to move in to help as pair of jackals prepared to ambush a marine when the marine moved with speed that bordered on Spartan-like. grabbing both the jackals he started interrogating them... horrifically. Killing one in the process he gave the wounded one to a floating engineer who wisped him off presumably to the sick bay.

"Scare tactics maybe?" Aurora his replacement AI suggested. But Master Chief wasn't listening to her constant babble he was looking at the marine, his black hair was cut long, the front mostly catching behind his ears with some strands hanging in the front, partially covering one eye, the back in a pony-tail. His skin was shiny-wet in hydrostatic gel, and his eyes, his eyes glowed with a bio-luminescence. He had seen the procedure before, a fad of dysfunctional youth before the Covenant war, usually purple green or blue. But his eyes were, orange, fiery orange. His eyes held... death.

"Spartan! Report!" _heâ€|he is just as powerful as me_

"Spartan?"

"prepped and ready, I'll take point" master chief was back in his training, emotions were for post mission

"Neg. Take support" Markis threw the Spartan his Battle rifle and his ammunition, reaching into Dylan's bag he took the pistol, slung it in its holster and put it opposite from his, for later. Grabbing Dylan's Grenades he slung them where his Battle rifle ammo would be, then grabbed Dylan's Combat knife mirroring it in his other hand with his own. Each hand now held the inverted grip of a knife, and a grenade.

"lets move"

duke mo, Buddha Bar

Vellen franticly thought of any other parts of the front lower decks that would be inhabited, not thinking of any she realized that the bulkhead beneath her feet was getting hot, very hot. _I have done all I can_ Racing to a grav lift, she fell in between two hunters. Reaching the top she raced to the bridge her speed carrying her strait into the back of a Brute as it turned a corner.

She bounced back falling to the deck

Funny how time Slows down

She saw her chain sprinkle gold, an ora of beauty past it the Brute turns

Funnyâ€|

The Necklace catches the light

Timeâ€|

"hope"

"_Vellen Remember this: hope never leaves, only our trust in it. In life there is hope of an end to oppression. In death there hope of life tomorrow. Even in Rain there is hope of sun. Keep your hope, my daughter Vellen. Keep your beliefs true to your soul"_

Darkness

Kallon? Please Kallon!

4. A Ballard for Kris

Chapter 4:

Ending a phase

My name is Vellen And today I came as closer to death than ever before.

For some reason I thought I would ether die at the hands of a brute.

Or in a green field.

A moment before the blow that would kill me

We, the ship, hit somethingâ€| hard.

The first hit flattened the hall way.

If I wasn't on my back I would of died with the brutes.

Then It went black an memories stood in cloaks, telling there stories, my story.

"_Kallon? Kallon? Why did you scar me?" _

Why do I still trust him?

"_I... I didn't mean toâ€|Vellen I am, so sorry"_

He never meant to hurt meâ€|

But he didâ€|the pain

And I stop at his door, everydayâ€|

I want to go in butâ€|

The pain...

Markus Smiled, as he hung from the rafters watching the killer squad that had just swarmed the room he was in. Now he hung from his feet, as seven Brutes and four Jackals searched the small room. He looked at his watch five minutes left.

Speaking in a voice that spawned fear he whispered "I don't have time

for you" and dropped two grenade pins.

"What that!" a Brute yelled hearing the sharp ping of steal on steal

"My debt to you" Markus spoke in his with his rough knowledge of Covenant basic dropping the grenades and crawling up for more cover.

The Brutes searched the room for the noise but only found two strange orbs, the commander picked them up trying to determine what they were. A moment later he and his companions were colored splotches on the wall.

Dropping down among the smoke and blood he moved to the door across the room. Above it glowed the Covenant symbol for "Bridge" lucky him, there was a shrapnel puncture hole next to the door about the size of his fist. Looking through he saw many, to many brutes to take alone.

"Status report" Markus said into his radio.

"Four and Five here, nearing you position"

"Ten, Eleven, Twenty-three and two Spartans, at the door to the bridge on the starboard side Master Chief is coming up on are position as well.

Markus waited a moment for two and Three to check in then sighed "Alright everybody, no heroics, we open the door firing squad style, no explosives, we need the equipment, and for god sakes, shoot them not the controls, the more we leave for ONI, the longer our shore leave." Kris and Chelsie, came up behind him crouching on either side. "What now boss?"

"We kill"

Domar felt the pin-pricks of anger swelling up and down his spine. Not only had a small boarding party of humans gotten all the way to the bridge making him pull all non necessary personnel off there stations and given them plasma rifles, his crew was near mutiny after a Jackal brought a rather horrific story back with his broken body to sick bay. And to make matters worse, the humans seemed to have a new weapon, no one knew what it did but the Neutrino readings from a few humans ships were off the chart.

Why wont they die already? We would be on the way to the Great Journey long ago if it wasn't for there bumbling efforts at survival!

His options were bleak. He was loosing ships as fast as he could shoot them down. And now a force that he new was stronger than him was outside the door, he would not admit it, but the feeling was there. Brushing up against him, bumping into him in his crowd of thoughts. He was near berserk, and was straining to suppress it.

On the other side of the door Markus clicked his radio twice, and it began to rain lead. At both sides of the Bridge doors cycled open and glowed with a blaze of automatic fire.

Domar through his weight into the Brute shot letting it slide him back, slide him back, and then walking slightly forward as he reloaded it. He was accompanied by three Brothers, A moments time and one took a Projectile blast that severed one of his leg, but as a tribute to his strength, he kept on firing. Then a Human vaulted his way forward burying two blades in the Poor Brute's neck, ripping them out horizontally, red lines casted onto the walls better than any brush could paint. Next the Brute on the left to Domar dropped to his knees, a gaping hole in his skull. Domar threw himself to the ground, using the corps of his war brother as cover his Brute shot was suppressing the larger group, but three humans from the other door were rushing to cover at one of the com stations. Domar thought fast, and primed a (Plasma Grenade) (holly flair).

Markus dived for the cover spot siring plasma burning into his shoulder. sliding into his new cover he found it occupied by a hiding Brute. Markus placed both barrels of the his pistols against the chest of the Animal and squeezed the triggers three times. The thing wheezed blood, and found Markus's eyes. Orange dots glowed in the Brutes, Markus saw his own eyes glow in the Beasts dieing thoughts and knew fear was all the Brute felt.

Chelsie ran to his position, thrown two feet in the air by a brute shot projectile exploding near her. she slid into the station on her shoulder plate, s shimmer of sparks.

"Sir, your hit!"

"Tell me something I don't know, were the hell is Kris?" Looking up he saw Kris sprinting to their position. looking strait ahead, not to the side, not to the threat.

A blue white ball burned to his chest and kris new he was dead, his eyes wide.

A moment he stood there. Then he dropped his shotgun, and ran. Ran forward ran strait into the white heat of a brute shot's projectile passing through his gut, passing through like his flesh was water. Screaming the hole time he ran up to the ramp. Screaming he lunged at the Brute. Then he was quite. Pure silence in the room.

Kris giggled once in the dark room void of sound. and the grenade detonated.

UNSC _Custer_ Battle of Dãllidis: duration eighteen minutes.

The combined force of the Elite and UNSC ships had established a perimeter and like clockwork, the Brute ships tightened into a ball taking a hit, returning to the inside to regain shields, and coming back out to shoot, and be shoot. Mitchell Logan looked down at his watch and cursed to himself for his stupidity. His watch was unreliable after being in zero gee, and he hadn't reset it yet.

"One minute and forty-five seconds. To detonate on time we will have to launch in twelve seconds."

"Any word?"

"25 mission success rate"

"Its done" Mitchell removed his spectacles, rubbing the bridge of his nose "fire at will"

Out of the front of the ship three perfectly black bullets swam into the void. Under no power but inertia, the three novas would find there way to the ball of ships, melting them over like butter in flame. The thought would of made the Captain smile, if it wasn't for the men and women that were some ware in that hive of ships.

UNSC _Custer_ based Dart crew, Onboard primary target. Battle duration, 18.5 minutes.

Chelsie rounded the corner calling out to Markus "bridge secure and barricaded!"

"Understood, Take tactical." Markus mumbled while holding optic cables in his mouth, applying his hacking terminal to the NAV station as fast as he could. "Spartans, apply your AI's to the ships computer core, we need to get out of here ten minutes ago!"

Taping the last of the system he ran the inscription cipher. On the massive holo structure next the main screen a Blue skinned elf in a scarlet cloak sat next to a pool were lines of code rippled away from her. there was a minor lurch, the hum of engines.

"Were moving!" Markus was starting to wonder if he was indeed going to survive this.

The elf was staring into the water, sending off blue ripples with her finger when a crimson ripple returned to her, she looked up eyes wide with fear "Hold on to **Something!**" the ship lurched to the side throwing everybody several feet. Markus could see stars on the Main screen. He pushed the engines to red, a contrail of ions billowing behind them. Out of the ball of ships There's shot strait out, like the human rocket ships of old. Spiraling away in the silence of space. the movies always show space as a loud place. but it is early silent. On the main viewer the ball of ships hung in space, then white light, light that acted as sand covering everything. a massive ball of white, that faded to blue, yellow, red, and finally to darkness, darkness void of ships. Humans did this? About time.

"Dart Crew to supper frigate Custer: mission accomplished"

"Glad to hear it bananas, marking your ship as UNSC friendly, the ONI spooks are acting like its Christmas!"

The radio crackled again, "what name do you give the ship?" The question caught Markus off guard, he remembered his CO on his first mission given the same honor, called the damn thing "The Fluffy" now he stood there, hiss boots sticking to the floor with all the blood, the corpses every ware, he spotted a mangled raiment of Kris, just an arm, with a tattoo on it, probley the biggest peace of him left.

"The Christopher" Markus smiled and knew Kris would approve. "Also I need a heavy strike team to clean out some rats onboard my ship."

Truthful Flower, DÃ;llidis

_Kallon... Kallon! _"Kallon!" Vellen woke in a haze, nothing was here she remembered except-

"Tilipi. nice to see your alive."

"don't mention it"

"Were?"

"DÃ;llidis, Primary continent"

"Primary... continent"

"crash landing, hello? anybody home?"

memories "The crash..." Vellen rubbed the spot on her neck, Coming instantly awake, were was it? were was the necklace? if others new she would beâ€|

"This is yours" Tilipi said, handing Vellen the crafted gold. Vellen reached for it, but found herself to weak, sat back down.

"Come on, we should get out of here, a lot of people need these beds" Tilipi was hanging the chain around Vellen's neck as he spoke.

"Tilipi, I cant move, it hurts to much" her lips tasted like copper and it felt like smoothing that wasn't her was keeping her guts together.

"I'll give you a hand to the grav-walkway" said a slender human female. _human?_ Vellen was not only confused but inspired to see a human not carrying arms against her.

As the human took Vellen's shoulder and walked her out of the green hut along lines of similar huts, she asked "Tilipi what is this place?"

"Their called me-deks, humans are quite the masters of herb lore. Their helping with the recovery of the ships crew" Tilipi was manipulating the controls of the grav-walk as the human set Vellen down on the base of the Grav walk, Vellen crumpled her legs underneath her, sitting in the fetal position.

Her head tilted back she started to look about herself. The blue sky above her was a warm bright color accented here and there with white. As the gravity of the planet was altered by the repulsion field she sat on, her head fell forward her vision following along without any specific task. She was on the top of a massive granite batholiths, the very top of a dome sticking out of the earth, and from visible end to end was longer than a curser stern to bow. The ground was thick with green forest, the horizon and the surrounding area was doted with the domes, white, in a world of green and blue.

Sitting among the trees like a beached fish the 'flower lay at the end of a short scar in the forest, the top was in relatively good condition, but the bottom was mangled, its ineredts thrashed apart.

"How, many... died?"

"300, twenty percent of the crew" The grav-walk took them in a strait line across to the ship, hanging in air on a purple force-field above a forest. Helpless, weak, Vellen cried.

Custer, Geo-sinkranis Orbit of Dã;llidis

Markus let walked into his dart bay. All the lights were out. Mechin and Chelsie were playing cards under grey lunar light casted from the moons above them. They saw him.

They saw what he was carrying.

The dart room was cold, separated from space by five centimeters of glass. Under the moon light Markus opened a dart. One by one he placed in a dog tag.

One by one.

He read the names aloud as he set them in their tomb.

Twenty two names.

Twenty three humans.

Kris's dog tag was welded into the captain's station were a ships dedication plaque would have been.

Markus closed the hatch to the Dart. The last six of his thirty men helped him wheal the dart to the MAC gun hatch placing it in the ordince tray. Turning to the Com, he pinged the bridge.

"Captain request permission to launch a dart"

"Permission Granted, one moment"

A whistle reverberated throughout the ship, and the captain spoke, simply and to the point. "aten-HUT salute port side!" Markus put two fingers to his lips, kissed them and placed them on the hatch as he closed it.

The ship shook with the acceleration of the dart. The black craft disappeared into the night.

Vellen came to a rest on the hull of the 'Flower. she managed to crawl off the grav pad, and sit in a heap on the silver metal of the hull. Her insides ached, and she was sure her leg was broken and newly set. After a moment a figure stood beside her. Warm to the touch,

warm to the touch

"Kallon. take me home"

"were is home?"

"with you Kallon. with you"

Vellen felt herself lifted in his arms, carried like a child.

"why didn't I forgive you a long time ago"

New York, New York, Earth.

Senator Anna Silverman Sat Next to Dendes, on a cafe just outside the Council chambers for the galactic Alliance of common beings. Anna like referring to it as G.A.B., and the name was sticking.

"We are attracting a lot less attention than on our precious lunch breaks" Dendes was a noticeably old, even for a Elite. His skin sagged slightly, and he seemed to have trouble standing at full height but his tone was carried the strength of a politician, even if his body did not.

"The hiding of the Covenant fleet within the atmosphere was not just a tactical decision." Anna flicked her hand skywards to the G.A.B. controlled Covenant ship that hung just above the city "people see the G.A.B. helping. They see us doing are part in the G.A.B. and the crews Allowed to come surface side when off duty. People are taking to this idea. Morale has been rock bottom for most of the war. People see hope, some for the first time in there life! do you know what that does to a population? In more rural areas Town governments are squabbling at each other over who gets to sponsor a Covenant craft!"

"Still my kind has destroyed all of your colony worlds. How do you justify eating with me?" Dendes put down his glass to greet a mutual friend Anna had waved over to the table.

General Mikola chuckled at this and sat down "actually we have six left, surprised you didn't know about them." Turing to the waitress "Green tea on the rocks, what don't give an old man that look!"

"When are you going to stop having so much fun old man?" Dendes grumbled between bites of halibut.

"When I Die, when else! How's your fish?"

"Delicious" The word almost didn't come out with all the chewing. He swallowed the last bit and ordered a cup of coffee.

"Why does you species like fish so much?" When Anna wanted to her Questions were so genuine you would expect them coming from a child.

"The short answer is it tastes like a delicacy from my Home-world"

"And the long answer?" Mikola said after draining his tee in a gulp.

"We actually hate fish from are Home-world, the closest thing I can think of it tasting like is a tough meat with the flavors of bug. we eat it only in dire situations. _Your_ fish tastes like a land animal our species seamed to have evolved to hunt, or at least our society did. You see, the things are about six units, I mean three meters high... and they bite."

"Well go ahead eat your fish, there easier to catch. Unlike sleep. Is

there any rivalry between your species Dendes?"

"No why?"

"Well, I have spent the last Few days dealing with more minor skirmishes than I have had to deal with for the last year, always the same thing, two Elites start brawling in public, in a bar, in a park, anywhere they wont hit anyone else basically. Its not enough to be a major issue I get one from each town hosting a G.A.B ship about every month. Its always the same A tall one and a â€"

"A tall one and rough one" Dendes sighed and rubbed his forehead. "That's the most obvious, while not always accurate way of telling our species' genders apart. The fighting is not actual fighting, its sparing. No fiscal harm, just exertion at each other. To us its... Sexual."

Mikola coughed on the mint that came with the tab. Anna blushed. Mikola was going to say something when both Dendes and Anna's communicator started buzzing.

"Well there pulling on our leash. We have to get back to the assembly, the four species' voting councils have started debates on the afternoons agenda. We should do this more often Mikola." She shook Mikola's hand before walking off.

Laying on the Russian accent Mikola said "Well my friend, you represent the leader of the rabble rousing politicians representing humanity; I need be kissing up to you."

(green bird, The seatbelts)

Vellen Curled her legs beneath her wrapped in Kallon's best blanket. The ships angle made the slope of the window in Kallon's cabin a appetizing one. She sat there with the rain pattering on the window, letting the sound keep her warm. In the distance she saw the crackle of plasma from a training exercise. Kallon returned with a steaming bowl of stew, handing it to her with the greatest of care. Snuggling up against her, Vellen's face warmed. they sat together, letting themselves forget everything. forget the war.

"how long, do we stay here?" Vellen asked sipping on her stew then setting it aside wrapping her arm around Kallon, allowing him to find his way into the protection of the blanket.

"shorter than I want" Kallon fingered the spot were the human me-deks repaired a mortal wound in his side. "once the ship is striped of equipment, They want me to take a command crew to educate a human crew how to use covenant craft."

(end song)

Tilipi, Commander Tilipi stood on the bridge of the Falcon. He was alone.

His new white armor gave a unworldly look to him. he traced his hands along the edge of each holo panel. Com, tak, nav, Egn, he walked up to his station. a panel grater in size than his height. a view of the stars outside and the Jupiter shipyards. hovering to the side, watched Cassandra, his ships AI. Tilipi picked her above the

available AI's for one reason; she respected his kind. In the floor next to his holo panel welded into the floor plating was the ship's insignia and name. _The falcon_.

"Cassandra, what's is the, a falcon?" Cassandra looked down fondly with green eyes, blue skin, and red hair. Her body was wrapped in a white robe that reminded Tilipi of a alpha female's garb.

"It's a bird of prey, a winged creature of extreme beauty. They specialize in hunting birds, sometimes larger ones, and land game." relevant pictures flashed onto the screen.

"And, do you think it a appropriate name for this ship?" Tilipi wondered how he ever got along without her council.

Cassandra glimmered with mathematic equations in a aura about her hologram. it seemed she was enjoying herself and had already thought of the answer. On the screen pictures of a serif fighter, a ONI stealth ship (against a white background), and the falcon. witch looked like ONI stealth ship with a spherical bulge in the center.

"Plasma weaponry is sickeningly more powerful then simple projectiles and explosives. And with there ability to maneuver it. its understandable why, not counting our resent technological advances, why we had a 24 success rate against the covenant fleet. The resent advances I was speaking of was our newfound information on plasma weaponry."

On the holo screen Pictures of plasma ejecting from a covenant ship and being warped into a significantly small point by what looked like the hulk of a human ship. Tilipi had heard all this before, at the briefing for his command. The ship was called the and was the escape vehicle for the Master Chief, a story declassified for morale.

"This ship," Cassandra lifted her hands identifying the mixture of covenant and human mettles around them, "Is a ship wrapped around a Fusion generator designed for capital ships!"

"I remember all this from the briefing, all two weeks of it, human power generators are much more powerful and with electricity based energy distribution, you can shunt more of it to a magnetic coil at once" Tilipi was trying his human designed captains chair, and found he liked standing more, and wrote down a note have it removed.

"Right, so now that we have the knowledge to create Covenant plasma emitters. This ship can put out four rounds a minute, and were talking capital ship level. Plus we have four Heathen class nukes at our use. Not to mention we don't show up on covenant sensors until we are within 25Km."

Tilipi dragged a pushed the overturned captain's chair over to the handrail in front of the main screen. Standing on it the railing was at waist level. And he shifted his weight over his hands this was his ship. And he was going to treat it well. In the back of his mind he remembered his mothers words. And thought of his duty to his ancestry.

"Plot a sub-light to mars naval. And send a message ahead of us for

the crew to get there personal items in order for departure" Tilipi wrote down a second note for a raised platform to replace the overturned chair. He looked over his recommendations, the removal of individual serving areas in the already cramped mess. Leaving only one, food was food, no mater who you ate with. The randomizing of cabins and beds, ignoring rank and species, excluding the himself and the other grunts, witch he allowed to fill up his methane atmosphere Captain's cabin with cots since it was the only one on the ship.

"Commander Tilipi?" Cassandra turned to him as he uploaded the information from his pad to the ships computer. "The brass are going to have a fit with this."

"Then order the parts and the crew will do it during our first run. Have you seen the mess, we have a bridge crew and an engineer, that's it, and we can't even fit them in!"

"Your sure your up to this?" Kallon asked Vellen pulling on the gloves. They were crouched on the green grass of San Francisco Park. The strange earth trees twisting around them.

"I want to do this, and its are last day before our next tour. Do you know what ship there giving you?" Vellen was beside herself with joy that she hadn't felt in years. She was stretching out, her skin warming surprising quickly in the bright sun. "I want to spar, we haven't in so long."

"Vellen. I love you." Kallon made sure his gloves were on tight; they weren't to soften blows, but to keep claws from extending instinctively. "Ready."

Vellen dropped into an attack stance as her skin tinged a darker shade of blue, (a sign of emotional interest, think blushing) but kallon threw the first jab. Vellen dropped and twisted grabbing kallon's jab, pushing him backs lading on all fours five meters away.

Pulling up her head Vellen's eyes were blazing with warmth she had not felt in years. She ran, hoofs digging into the grass, strait at Kallon. She knew it was predictable, she was counting on it. Kallon saw it two and leaned forward.

Kallon, Kallon I'm going to love this Vellen's mind raced with the action

Pulling her had back for a punch Kallon pulled himself for a block. Seeing this Vellen froze her legs keeping her eyes open as she collided with the grass and rolled with feet upward she kicked up.

And hit air?

In a moment of recognition she only had time to brace. She had no idea were her love was but he out smarted her. And when that happened in sparing it was only a mater of time until-

The sound of flesh smacking flesh filled her ears, followed by the sound of wind. There was a moment of realization that she was nearly vertical, upside down, and moving sideways at high speed, then the

thump of the trees. Vellen could only grin in ecstasy at how perfect his counter was.

Kallon crouched on his mate and held her arms in a pin.

"thast $\frac{1}{4}$!" Kallon spoke the ancient tung's word for dominance. The first count.

"Mailindiy" Vellen grunted the word Compassion. It was made difficult by the leg caught under her. But if she could...

Kallon took quick inhale to say the final word to end the spar when Vellen's body flexed between his legs bolting him skyward. As he lost his grip, Vellen turned between his legs to face him, moving with the grace of zero gee. With one arm she pressed Kallon to her. With the other she seized a branch of the tree they had now reached at the apex of the vertical jump. With gravity returning there bodies swung on Vellen's arm. As she let go kallon found himself looking past Vellen to sky not grass.

The mutual weight collided with the grass and Kallon found he was being held down by a position usually reserved for... more privet moments. Vellen's voice was hard to hear over her hot, heavy breathing. But after a moment she managed a raged-

"Thast $\frac{1}{4}$!"

Phase 1- end

End
file.